

SHIELD FOR SUCCESS

Valparaiso University's Counseling Center monthly tips for success and promotion of overall wellbeing

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Instructions

Step 1: If you choose to participate, first rate your mood on a 1-10 scale, you can use the Mental Health Pain scale provided below.

Step 2: Each day you will have the opportunity to complete a different exercise. On weekdays, Monday through Friday, pick one exercise from the list provided for you below. On weekends, Saturday & Sunday, choose one exercise that you felt improved your mood the most, these exercises do not have to be from the exercises provided.

Step 3: After implementing the exercise, rate your mood using the same scale as Step 1.

Stress: Election, Academic, and Pandemic

During this time, a host of separate external stressors can greatly impact our mental health. The election is quickly approaching, finals are around the corner, and the timing of solutions to the pandemic remains highly uncertain. It is important to be aware of these diverse factors and the numerous ways they impact our thoughts, feelings, and interactions with others. Due to all these events occurring both simultaneously and synergistically, we wanted to provide you with helpful resources to educate you on the ways this stress can impact you as well as to provide you strategies to decrease your reactions to this stress.

*** Election Stress Consultations will be provided 10/29-11/6. Please call 219-464-5002 to schedule yours.**

Helpful Resources on Stress

- [Stress](#)
- [Ways to cope with election anxiety](#)
- [Election a Source of Significant Stress](#)
- [Coping with Finals](#)
- [Stress Management for Students](#)
- [Pandemic Stress](#)
- [Dealing with COVID-19](#)
- <https://psychiatry.ucsf.edu/copingresources/covid19>

A Simple Mental Health Pain Scale

thegracefulpatient.wordpress.com

M I L D		1 Everything is a-okay! There is absolutely nothing wrong. You're probably cuddling a fluffy kitten right now. Enjoy!
		2 You're a bit frustrated or disappointed, but you're easily distracted and cheered up with little effort.
		3 Things are bothering you, but you're coping. You might be overtired or hungry. The emotional equivalent of a headache.
M O D E R A T E		4 Today is a bad day (or a few bad days). You still have the skills to get through it, but be gentle with yourself. Use self-care strategies.
		5 Your mental health is starting to impact on your everyday life. Easy things are becoming difficult. You should talk to your doctor.
		6 You can't do things the way you usually do them due to your mental health. Impulsive and compulsive thoughts may be hard to cope with.
S E V E R E		7 You're avoiding things that make you more distressed, but that will make it worse. You should definitely seek help. This is serious.
		8 You can't hide your struggles anymore. You may have issues sleeping, eating, having fun, socialising, and work/study. Your mental health is affecting almost all parts of your life.
		9 You're at a critical point. You aren't functioning anymore. You need urgent help. You may be a risk to yourself or others if left untreated.
		10 The worst mental and emotional distress possible. You can no longer care for yourself. You can't imagine things getting any worse. Contact a crisis line immediately.

Daily exercises to decrease stress

1. Spend 10 minutes identifying aspects of your life you have control of
2. Take a mental health day, free of concern from above issues, and not feel an ounce of guilt.
3. Get up and Get Moving. Do something active.
4. Unplug: Limit your consumption of social media and the 24-hour non-stop images. It's important to stay informed, but creating boundaries is important.
5. Journal & reflect: Use reflection to recognize your inner thoughts and feelings. Be curious and non-judgmental and give yourself permission to feel the way you do. Although avoiding can be useful, "stuffing" or ignoring strong emotions can have negative impacts.

*Additional exercises can be found in the resources above.

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